2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1966) 1960 8V3 H681 8V3

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. Wherever Ayida Wédo sloughed his position there were earthquakes.[1] When the rainbow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayida had come out from under the earth to drink of the fresh water. [796] [171] [821]

Damballa Grand Courtier (Damballa of the Highway). Another manifestation of Damballa as a protector of those on long journeys. [484]

Damballa Fèrèr. Another manifestation of Damballa.

Dessou Wédo. Considered to be the daughter of Damballa. The ending of her name (-ou) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

Dosu Wédo. A member of Damballa's family.

Acido Wédo. A member of Damballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids men with their gardens, especially in time of illness. [241]

Fèrèr Dosa, or Dosa, sometimes spelled Erelu. One of the "big" loa of the Dahomé pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and sprinkling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Fèrèr are sometimes bound to her by mystic marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days which belong to her. There are a number of Fèrèrs, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Fèrèr Dobu as the ancestor of the Fèrèr family and refer to her as Grand Fèrèr. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dogbo at approximately 6° 6' E., 6° 52' N. [177] [822] [482] [987] [834] [588]

Fèrèr Pédo, or Fèrèr Dansoaw (Dahomé), or Fèrèr Pédo Dansoaw. Like Fèrèr Dobu, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. [177] [588] [987] [834]

Fèrèr Wédo. A sister or daughter of Fèrèr Dobu and also related to Damballa.

Fèrèr Madjo. A sister of Fèrèr Pédo.

Fèrèr Bando. A manifestation of Fèrèr who is especially fond of the Bando dance.

Fèrèr Jénocon (Red Eyes). A stern and hard Fèrèr who is often identified with Pétro rather than Dahomé rites.

Aloon Pédo. A member of the Fèrèr escorte, regarded as a market-place protector. In Dahomey, Aloon was a protector of all public gathering places.[2] [483] [971]

Aloon Balindji

Aloon Dlaau Bolo Bowo

Maîtresse Masséo. A special form of Fèrèr as priestess.

Maîtresse Espagnole, or Pagnola. A person mounted by this Fèrèr talks only Spanish. [987] [971]

Sobo, or Sogbo. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. Some of the stones thrown by Sobo are regarded as the sacred residence of various loa. Sobo (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey. [776] [171]

Sobo Badé, or Sobo Badé, or simply Badé. A close relative of Sobo, regarded as the protector of the hounfor (*badé*). In Dahomey, Badé is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sobo.[3]

[1] [See Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp. 41-49; and Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 246ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. --Analyst]

[2] [Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. --Analyst]

[3] [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 152ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

Ti Courlander 8-6 (1937-1938) 1939 8V3 HAAI 8V3

[The Congo and Petro Pantheons]

Tijean Pied Cofrem (Tijean Dry Foot). One of the malevolent Tijean brothers. 796
Tijean Dézaimé, or Kitta Dézaimé. Thought to be the son of Kitta Bayé.
Yamsé Lonsa. A deity of Congo origin.
Zio Pierre
Zaka Tonnerre (Zaka Thunder)
Zaka Gonzi
Zaka L'Orage (Zaka Storm)
Yaki Bonsoir
Guinguinon
Mandadenna
Sanmon. (Senegal). When this lwa comes, the mounted person talks "Arabic." [797] [791]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the intervening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply divided into two segments, and that the national institutional structure is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking, although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite religion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organization are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is sometimes polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the countryman is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century, Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect, the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's entire history.

Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African" cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Any crucial attempt to assess the importance of religion

lives of the people is sure to prove erroneous, for in no phase of life are outward appearances so deceptive. What the unsophisticated peasant believes can be ascertained on the whole more accurately than the beliefs of the intelligent élite. To the foreign observer, Roman Catholicism seems to play as large and as small a part in the thinking of the Haitian upper classes as among members of upper-class French society. Outwardly, the élite are professing Catholics or not religious at all. It is considered proper to attend Mass and otherwise to pay respect to religious forms; actually one loses nothing in prestige if he is not a practicing Christian. Society seems to exert no pressure in the matter. Only if a member of the upper class fears for the security of his social position, or knows that rumors are afloat of his addiction to Vodun, does he feel impelled to become assiduous in his open attentions to the Church.

The national sensitiveness to skin color is apparent in the priestly complexions. Since the old tradition lingers that "baptism by a black will not stick," not even the peasants welcome native Catholic priests. The God and saints of Christianity need the intercession of white men, just as the Vodun spirits need that of natives. In the early days peasants stoned Negro priests who tried to administer the Catholic sacraments. Such an attitude toward a black clergy falls in well with the preferences of the élite. If there were Haitian priests, they would probably be drawn from the élite class since this is the educated group; but it might happen that some devout peasant would rise to the priesthood and so have the care of a parish including élite—a contingency unthinkable to the aristocrat. Snobbishness, indeed, affects the usefulness of the town priests, for the élite members of the congregation insist on having sermons in French, a language which only the small minority understand, rather than in the Créole which is the speech of everyone, intelligible to gentry and humble alike. The Mass is consequently celebrated for the people at large: in unknown tongues, Latin for the ritual, French for the sermon;; the benefit they derive from it must be wholly from their inner communion stimulated by the actions of the service. The town priests are often willing enough to accede to élite pressure in the matter of language, for they know French as their mother tongue and would have to learn Créole; although some of the more devoted priests become adept in native speech, using it in their personal

H: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

793
191
796
[829]

ministry and in sermons in country chapels." For the *élite*, well groomed, sitting with his missal in a seat bearing his name plate, the psychic elation to be derived from hearing a sermon preached in a language which the rabble seated around him does not know must be very great—and very Christian.

793
191

17. I have heard a sermon in the chapel at fashionable Kenscoff preached in Créole, with the President of the republic, himself a mulatre—and a politically astute one—of Créole in the congregation. Likewise, I have met priests who, although they have lived in the country for a generation, have never learned the tongue used by ninety-five out of a hundred of their parishioners all the time, and by a hundred per cent of them some of the time.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

lished in many parts of the country. Attendance was fair for a few days, then rapidly declined. It is obviously a task requiring patience, persistence, originality, and tact on the part of the teacher to keep the students interested enough in school to make them attend regularly, for certainly the parents, who themselves have had no education, will not force their children to attend. On the contrary, the average peasant parent feels it much more important for his children to be at work in the fields, doing something useful, than to waste time learning to read and write—accomplishments which peasants have done without from time immemorial. Forced attendance is clearly out of the question. Obviously, too, at the small wages paid to country teachers the necessary qualities of personality are uncommon, to say the least. Five thousand men and women with the consecration of missionaries would be required even to begin the work of general education.

A practically insoluble problem, given current attitudes, is that of the language to be used in rural schools, assuming that these are built. The only official language of Haiti is French; the only language understood by the masses is Créole, which in spite of its French origin is as different from that tongue as Dutch from German. Now every Haitian, high and low, knows Créole, so that the question immediately arising is: Why should not the rural teachers teach in Créole? The answer involves every sort of inward prejudice, yearning, and instilled doctrine. The teacher is almost sure to be struggling up to the élite class, and to require him to deny himself the luxury of speaking French (to him almost a patent of nobility) would be heart-rending. Likewise, he would have his "good" reason for teaching school in French: the unity of the country demands a single language; all schoolbooks are in French, none in Créole; and Créole has no literature, nor even an accepted spelling. The fact remains that except in rare instances all schoolteachers use French to their pupils, and not one peasant out of a hundred can even guess what is being said in that language.

Assuming that schools were available, as well as trained teachers willing to speak the folk language, the next problem would be the curriculum. The whole tradition of élite education is literary, not practical. Teachers trained in this tradition might teach Racine and Montaigne, but not soil conservation and new methods of planting. Peasants with a knowledge of French literature would, of course, be

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p 297]

XVIII

THE CRÉOLE LANGUAGE

JUST as Haiti is a country of two distinct social strata, so it possesses two distinct languages, French and Créole. Only the élite speak French, but everyone in the country, from the president to the humblest dullard, speaks Créole. Aristocrats call the latter language disparagingly a *patois*. But is it? When does a patois or a dialect become a true language? When it has definite rules of grammar, declension, rhetoric? Créole has them all, even though the users are unaware of the rules. When it acquires the dignity of a literature? Increasingly the most original Haitian authors write their novels and poems in Créole or with large passages in that tongue—and did English suddenly cease to be a patois and become a language only when Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* appeared? When it is the language of passion, of sorrow, of delicate nuance? Here more than anywhere Créole meets the requirements, as any honest Haitian would confess by his lapse into Créole at moments of emotion. When it gains wide concurrence? No Haitian is ignorant of Créole.

Two centuries have witnessed the birth of this new tongue, but because it has been the speech of the lower orders this has not been accounted a noteworthy phenomenon, has not been praised as a philological achievement, has only recently been studied by linguists. Most people have been content to regard it as a debasement of French—and poor French at that. Yet were not Italian and French likewise debasements of Latin by the common folk, and English even more of a debasement and a hodgepodge? In 1700 Créole existed only in germ; by 1800 it was already formed—a kind of social cement which held together all that diffuse humanity which was shortly to become an independent nation.

Créole is not, as most people (even cultured Haitians) assume, the degeneration of French which occurred when benighted African slaves tried to learn and speak a new language. On the contrary, it was already a language when the slaves were brought into Saint-Domingue. They learned it quickly, and in the course of two hundred years they and their descendants, who have known no other tongue, have modified it only as any people slowly transform

B: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Norman ones were less complicated; English, simpler still, reinforced the Norman tendency.

From the Spaniards of the Caribbean region Créole borrowed not only nouns (generally the most assimilable of words), but a large number of adjectives, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and certain subtler characteristics of speech.

This amalgam, then, three quarters Norman French, was the Créole language as of 1697 when France acquired Saint-Domingue, when buccaneering became unprofitable, and many of the filibusters settled down to begin a respectable life as plantation owners in the new colony. African slaves were soon imported to satisfy the demand for labor. First a few, then thousands a year and increasing thousands, were brought to Saint-Domingue. In all externalities, of which language is one, slaves must yield up their old ways and take on new. The question of interest here is to what extent the Negroes influenced Créole, giving it an "African" character.

The answer, surprising at first, is that the Negro influence was almost negligible.

In the first place, Créole was now already a language with a rich vocabulary, all the grammatical equipment, and the necessary regularities. The slaves came to the colony from all parts of Africa, and so with widely differing languages. Linguistic maps of Africa indicate the presence of hundreds of dialects up and down the west coast; tribes living fifteen miles apart spoke languages which, although belonging to the same stock, were as different as Spanish and Italian from each other. Owing to the habit of dispersing the slaves, the average Negro had no common basis of understanding with his fellow slaves on the same plantation. Practically all white foremen and overseers gave orders in Créole; this within one generation became the *lingua franca* of the plantations, an economic necessity, and socially indispensable.

In the second place, there was in Saint-Domingue no equivalent to the familiar objects of life in Africa. Trees, houses, earth there were, of course, but different kinds of trees, houses, and soil. Economic tasks were performed in a different manner with new techniques and organization. Every outward form of life was foreign to the African background. Even assuming that there had been a common Negro speech, it would have found little to attach itself to in the New World. It should be noted that Negroes likewise made few contribu-

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite

and where French is taught in the schools, the Créole is less "pure" than in the untutored countryside. Even there the language is changing, for there is steadily operating that "law of simplification" which reduces the complications of language when it has only an oral tradition.[11] Abridgement occurs more and more frequently, agglutination is more apparent, and words tend toward the monosyllabic.

Everyone in Haiti speaks and understands Créole. Nursemaids teach it to their élite charges, so that children know it from infancy; élite lovers lapse into its expressive phrases in order to say something particularly intimate which might sound sentimental in French; priests must use it in their parish work if they are to be understood at all. Even the élite presidents have found it wise to speak often to the countrypeople in their own tongue. The gendarmes would be helpless in their police work without it, as would the agricultural, health, and other governmental services. It is the language in which all the small business of Haiti is conducted.[12] Ernest Douyon has written brilliantly and revealingly about it:

> If, on the one hand, we have a business language, an official tongue, which is French, our true maternal language, on the other hand, that one which we first lisp, that of the country as a whole (I had almost said "of the true country," for such is the case), that of the city people as well as of country-folk, that of all families whatever their differences in education, the language one hears not only in humble huts but in luxurious villas, not only in offices or among the masses but also in private apartments and salons, that which for the crudest as for the most finely cultivated minds (even when these latter through snobbery try to deny the fact) is at all times the most naturally expressive, that which perfectly translates our deepest sentiments (jubilation, anger, love, or whatever) precisely when these are most strongly felt, that which all of us, all (with the rarest exceptions) use spontaneously—is Créole! I know that it is not considered proper in polite society, that it sometimes lends a certain impression of vulgarity, that it is not the correct language for distinguished people—when they are in public! But who is the man of propriety, who the society woman, who in private does not continually use Créole?[13]

12. See P. Crassaert, *Les Parts romains* (Toulouse, 1929), p. 18.

13. It must be stated that in the Vodun service the houngan sometimes speaks in langage, which is not Créole. It purports to be pure African, but is more likely to be mere gibberish.

14. In his Preface to Price, *op. cit.*, p. v.